A Word To The Wise. . .

by Maryjo Adams Cochran, M.A. '76, Ph.D. '80
photos by Philip Dattilo

Professor Maryjo Adams Cochran wrote the following advice to a young relative preparing to leave for college. We thought we'd share this with our readers, many of whom may have college-bound sons and daughters.

1) Don't overindulge in your new-found freedom.

2) Become good friends with the library. Visit it often and know your way around the building.

3) Enjoy college life. Partake of the free movies, seminars, dances, athletic events. . . the extracurricular activities are "almost" as important as time spent in the classroom.

4) Write your parents. (Yes, the phone is convenient, too, but there is something to be said about the lost art of letter writing. It's also nice to receive mail.)

5) Budget your money wisely. Don't blow it all at the beginning of either the month or the semester.

6) Watch out for "Kamikazes" and "Black Russians." They sneak up on you. So does excessive beer. . .

7) If you get an assignment due two weeks from today, start on it now. . . get it done early and savor the satisfaction of your accomplishment.

8) One bad quiz or test grade is not a big deal. Several bad grades *can* be hazardous to your health and well being.

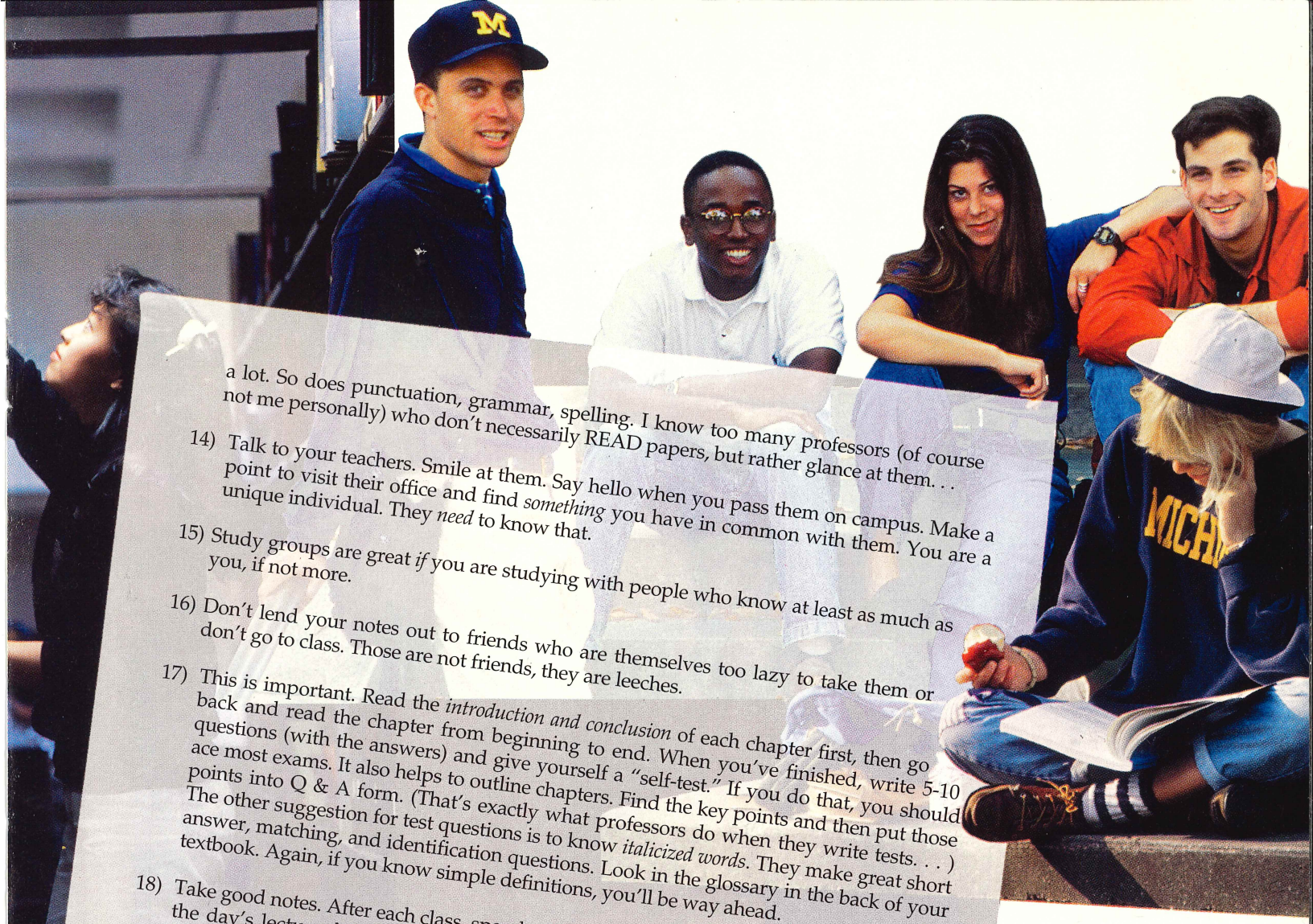
9) The only stupid questions are the ones you don't ask and wish you had.

10) Get to know your professors and/or graduate students. It is much harder to dismiss someone's work if you have a vested interest in a student. Become a genuine person to your teacher. It's not brown-nosing. . . it's insurance. Also, you'll probably discover that some of your profs. are pretty cool outside of class.

11) Don't skip class. You've paid for it, or your parents have. Get your money's worth. . . you might even learn something interesting.

12) I always hated math and science. Both came very hard for me. However, they were required classes and while I might have disagreed with you at the time, I'm glad I had to take them. Call it a rite of passage. Tenacity. Hangin' in there.

13) Type *all* of your assignments. Do not turn in handwritten papers. . . particularly in pencil or torn out of a spiral notebook. Looks mean



a lot. So does punctuation, grammar, spelling. I know too many professors (of course not me personally) who don't necessarily READ papers, but rather glance at them. . .

14) Talk to your teachers. Smile at them. Say hello when you pass them on campus. Make a point to visit their office and find *something* you have in common with them. You are a unique individual. They *need* to know that.

15) Study groups are great *if* you are studying with people who know at least as much as you, if not more.

16) Don't lend your notes out to friends who are themselves too lazy to take them or don't go to class. Those are not friends, they are leeches.

17) This is important. Read the *introduction and conclusion* of each chapter first, then go back and read the chapter from beginning to end. When you've finished, write 5-10 questions (with the answers) and give yourself a "self-test." If you do that, you should ace most exams. It also helps to outline chapters. Find the key points and then put those points into Q & A form. (That's exactly what professors do when they write tests. . .) The other suggestion for test questions is to know *italicized words*. They make great short answer, matching, and identification questions. Look in the glossary in the back of your textbook. Again, if you know simple definitions, you'll be way ahead.

18) Take good notes. After each class, spend a few minutes to review what was important in the day's lecture. You could even write a few sample questions & answers for your study guide. (Profs. do this too. . .)

19) Enjoy college. It is truly one of the most exciting times in your life.

20) Flirt. Make friends. Be yourself. The one regret I have from all my years in college was that I was so terribly introverted. I have very few friends I keep in touch with. John III, on the other hand, stays in touch with zillions of his fraternity brothers and fellow comrades. Three guesses who has "happier" memories? Both John and I should have practiced "moderation"—partying for him and studying in the theology library on Friday and Saturday nights for me. . .

21) Take advantage of all the activities the dance program has to offer. If there is a dance club, join it. If they need technical help for productions/performances, volunteer. . . get yourself IMMERSED in the program. Just because you are a freshman doesn't mean you should be timid. . . apply for workstudy. . . tutoring little "tappers" on Saturdays. . . Make every minute in your major count.

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